TOP SECRET

DAILY INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

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By authority of AG31 letter dated 24 March 1949
by DS Tait on 5/16/60

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16 April 1951

DAILY INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

FAR EAST

CHINA (TOP SECRET-CONTROL/U. S. OFFICIALS ONLY) 1443

An official United States air observer, Hong Kong, has forwarded the estimate of a friendly European Power relative to the capabilities of the Chinese Communist Air Force (CCAF) against Hong Kong.

The CCAF is estimated to total about 400 aircraft, including about 100 light bombers capable of carrying two tons of bombs each, and 250 ground attack planes. About one-half the ground attack aircraft (125) are believed designed for tactical support and capable of carrying about 500 pounds of bombs in addition to guns and rocket weapons.

If the entire force were based on fields within a 300-mile radius of Hong Kong, the CCAF is estimated to be capable of a maximum scale of attack totaling approximately 60 light bombers and 60 to 70 ground attack planes, capable of delivering 140 to 150 tons of bombs. A sustained rate was estimated at 30 to 35 bombers and 60 to 65 ground attack planes, capable of delivering 85 to 95 tons of bombs daily.

The estimate acknowledged that the CCAF difficulty in its rapid build-up revolved around the provision and training of aircrews. It was not considered reasonable to credit the CCAF with high standards of flying or operational efficiency; ability and precision would not be of high order, especially against opposition. The estimate was predicated on the assumption that Soviet material and personnel assistance would be available to CCAF, and that Soviet planes would be available to defend the CCAF airbases.

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It was estimated that, within the 300-mile radius of Hong Kong, there are six airfields known to be in use, four believed to be in use, and 13 believed to be usable.

The reporting officer states that the estimate of aircraft is in contrast to the sometimes extravagant claims of the Nationalists, and that the truth probably lies somewhere between. He regarded the figure of 23 airfields within a 300-mile radius of Hong Kong as excessive, and believed that the estimated scale of attack and efficiency was also excessive because of the training status of the CCAF.

Comment: The CCAF is currently estimated at approximately 350 aircraft, in addition to which are approximately 300 more regarded as being under the control of the Soviet Air Force. The figure reported in the estimate (400) is therefore regarded as reasonable.

G-2 agrees with the reporting officer's observation that the estimate may be excessive with regard to the scale of the attack and the ability of the CCAF to sustain operations, although maintenance limitations would be largely overcome by Soviet aid which was assumed in the preparation of the estimate.

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by D. J. Tait 5/16/60

EURASIA-FAR EAST

U.S.S.R.-MANCHURIA (TOP SECRET) 1666

A source in Hong Kong reports that, on 24 March, 14 "long-range heavy Soviet bombers" landed at Changchun, Manchuria, which is now to be their permanent base.

The bombers reportedly flew from Gorki Air Base (275 miles east of Moscow) via Poli (Manchurian town 200 miles northwest of Vladivostok) and were under the command of a Soviet Air Force lieutenant colonel.

Comment: The "long-range heavy Soviet bombers" are presumably TU-4's, the counterpart of the B-29. An unidentified bomber regiment is believed to be stationed at Gorki, and that air field would be a logical origin of such a flight.

While Poli is not in the direct line of flight between Gorki and Changchun, such a formation possibly would first land and report to the Soviet Air Force Headquarters at Khabarovsk. If such a landing were made, Poli (midway between Khabarovsk and Changchun) would be a normal stop-over point; it is believed to have a runway of approximately 5,000 feet in length.

Changchun would be a logical point at which to station long-range bombers; runways there are of permanent type, some being 7,800 feet long.

While no information is currently available either to confirm or to refute the subject report, and the report was given no evaluation as to either source or information, the arrival of TU-4's in Manchuria is regarded as entirely possible.

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